



**HONOLULU
FESTIVAL
FOUNDATION**

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May 11, 2015

Ann H. Kobayashi, Chair
Committee on Budget
Honolulu City Council

Aloha Chair Kobayashi and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Honolulu Festival Foundation, I would like to register our opposition to the proposal being considered to cut the budget of the Office of Economic Development.

I am very concerned that cutting OED's budget will be harmful to the people of Oahu if its funding to deserving recipients is subsequently eliminated because of this action. If that were to happen to the Honolulu Festival Foundation, our mission and continuing efforts to promote an enlightened spirit of cultural appreciation between Hawaii and the Pacific Rim would be negatively impacted.

For example, a reduction in OED's budget could result in a loss of funding for the 70th anniversary commemoration of the end of World War II that is being planned for August 15, including the highly anticipated fireworks show over Pearl Harbor. A loss in funding would put organizers in a difficult bind at this late stage of the planning process.

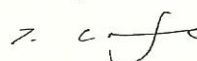
The fireworks show is being staged by Nagaoka City, Japan, and is a resulting benefit of the sister-city relationship that was established with Honolulu several years ago and supported with funding from OED. The Nagaoka Fireworks Show has been the culmination of the Honolulu Festival the past four years and emerged as the highlight event of this annual celebration of Pacific Rim culture.

The annual Honolulu Festival is a deserving recipient of OED funding and the monies have been put to excellent use in helping to stage the free cultural performances and exhibit displays for residents and visitors to enjoy. An estimated 120,000 people enjoyed the Festival's activities and performances this year. Of that total, an estimated 5,000 people came to Honolulu from Japan and other Pacific Rim countries just to take part in the Festival, representing a significant contribution to Hawaii's tourism economy and tax revenue.

The loss of funding from OED to the Honolulu Festival, as a result of the proposed budget cut, would be felt most by the residents of Oahu in the potential elimination of events or programs that contribute to our quality of life.

With all due respect to the committee, I urge that the proposed budget cut be rejected.

Mahalo,


Tsukasa Harufuku
President
Honolulu Festival Foundation

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2015 MAY 11 PM 12:25

Item #5
Bill 13 (2015), CD1

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